

## Message Text

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ORIGIN NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-12 IO-14 ISO-00 PRS-01 H-02  
SSM-05 SIG-02 EB-08 SOE-01 DOE-12 TRSE-00 ARA-14  
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DRAFTED BY NEA/P:WBHARRIS:DP  
APPROVED BY NEA/P:REUNDELAND  
S/PRS - MR. CARTER (INFO)  
H - MR. FLATEN (INFO)  
SSM - MR. MC ANDREW  
NEA - MR. NEUMANN  
NEA/IAI - MR. SMITH  
NEA/ARN - MR. DRAPER  
NEA/EGY - MR. NEWBERRY  
NEA/ARP - MR. TWINAM

-----130436 230343Z /66

O 230053Z DEC 77  
FM SECSTATE WASHDC  
TO AMEMBASSY AMMAN IMMEDIATE  
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT IMMEDIATE  
AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE  
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE  
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM IMMEDIATE  
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE  
AMEMBASSY JIDDA IMMEDIATE  
AMEMBASSY MANAMA  
AMEMBASSY RABAT  
AMEMBASSY SANA  
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN  
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI  
AMEMBASSY TUNIS  
USMISSION SINAI  
AMCONSUL DHAHRAN  
USMISSION GENEVA  
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM  
AMEMBASSY LONDON  
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AMCONSUL ALEXANDRIA  
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW  
USMISSION USNATO  
AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT  
AMEMBASSY PARIS  
AMEMBASSY ROME  
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK  
AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI  
AMEMBASSY ALGIERS  
USINT BAGHDAD

AMEMBASSY DOHA  
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT  
USCINCEUR  
JCS  
DOD  
CIA  
USIA  
NSC

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CINCEUR FOR POLAD; TEL AVIV FOR PAO, DELIVER BY 9 A.M.

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR

SUBJECT:DEPARTMENT PRESS BRIEFING - DECEMBER 22, 1977

1. FOR YOUR INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE FOLLOWING ARE EXCERPTS  
FROM DEPARTMENT PRESS BRIEFING FOR DECEMBER 22. FYI ONLY,  
OFFICER PRESENT TODAY WAS HODDING CARTER.

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MR. CARTER: WE ARE PLEASED THAT OPEC OIL PRICES APPARENTLY  
WILL NOT BE INCREASED THE NEXT SIX MONTHS, AND THAT LEADERS  
OF A NUMBER OF OIL-PRODUCING COUNTRIES OPPOSE ANY PRICE  
INCREASE THROUGH AT LEAST THE FULL YEAR 1978. WE SHARE  
THEIR CONVICTION THAT ANY PRICE INCREASE WOULD BE DAMAGING  
TO INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL MARKETS AND THE WORLD ECONOMY  
AND WOULD AGGRAVATE THE ALREADY DIFFICULT ECONOMIC SITUATION  
OF MANY DEVELOPING COUNTRIES. THE REALITIES OF GLOBAL  
INTERDEPENDENCE ARE SUCH THAT THESE DIFFICULTIES WOULD  
AFFECT ADVERSELY THEIR OWN ECONOMIES. WE TRUST THAT THIS  
CONVICTION WILL ULTIMATELY BE TRANSLATED INTO A DECISION TO  
FREEZE OPEC OIL PRICES AT LEAST THOROUGHOUT 1978. THE OPEC  
DECISION TO MAINTAIN STABLE OIL PRICES WILL HELP IN OUR  
EFFORTS TO SUSTAIN OUR ECONOMIC EXPANSION AND REDUCE IN-  
FLATION. FOR OUR PART, THE UNITED STATES MUST PRESS AHEAD  
WITH THE ENACTMENT OF A STRONG DOMESTIC ENERGY PROGRAM.

Q. THE FACT THAT SAUDI ARABIA AND IRAN LED THE FIGHT FOR  
THE FREEZE AT THE MEETING, DOES THE ADMINISTRATION TAKE  
SOME CREDIT FOR HAVING CONVINCED THEM TO TAKE THAT STAND  
AND SINCE THE SHAH ANNOUNCED HERE THAT HE WAS GOING TO  
FAVOR A FREEZE?

A. OUR POSITION HAS BEEN WELL KNOWN. WE BELIEVE THAT BOTH  
COUNTRIES TOOK THAT POSITION AS WHAT THEY CLEARLY FELT TO  
BE IN THE INTEREST OF BOTH THEIR OWN NATIONS AND OF THE  
WORLD ECONOMY.

Q. A TECHNICAL QUESTION, HODDING: WHEN DO YOU EXPECT THE OPEC COUNTRIES WOULD MAKE THIS A PERMANENT FREEZE, OR RATHER A FREEZE FOR NEXT YEAR, BECAUSE THEY BROKE UP IN INDECISIONS, AS FAR AS ONE COULD SEE.

A. OF COURSE, THE NET EFFECT IS, AS I HAVE SAID, THEY WILL BE MEETING AGAIN, AND I SUPPOSE AT THAT TIME, THEY WILL TAKE THE MATTER UNDER CONSIDERATION AGAIN.  
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Q. ARE YOU REFERRING TO THE NEXT MEETING IN JUNE?

A. YES.

Q. THERE HAS BEEN A LOT OF TALK ABOUT ISRAEL'S ALLEGED REFUSAL TO MAKE CONCESSIONS. IN VIEW OF ISRAEL'S ALLEGED REFUSAL TO MAKE CONCESSIONS. IN VIEW OF ISRAEL'S RELEASE OF ONE EGYPTIAN ARMY, PLUS ISRAEL'S WITHDRAWAL FROM THE EAST BANK OF THE SUEZ CANAL, FROM THE MITLA AND GIDI PASSES AND FROM THE ABU-RUDEIS OIL FIELDS, DOES THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION FEEL THAT THESE WERE NOT CONCESSIONS?

A. LET ME SAY SOMETHING, GENERALLY, ABOUT THE STATE OF PLAY IN THESE NEGOTIATIONS. THE UNITED STATES ATTITUDE AT THIS TIME IS NOT WHAT MATTERS. THE EGYPTIAN AND ISRAELI LEADERS ARE TALKING DIRECTLY AND INTEND TO CONTINUE TALKING DIRECTLY. THIS IS THE DEVELOPMENT WE HAVE WELCOMED, CONTINUE TO WELCOME IT, AND HOPE TO CONTINUE TO DO WHAT WE CAN TO FACILITATE, AND IT'S REALLY NOT FOR US TO BE JUDGING WHAT IS BEING HANDLED VERY WELL INDEED BY THESE TWO COUNTRIES; AND I SIMPLY AM NOT GOING TO INTERPRET PAST HISTORY IN THAT REGARD.

Q. THERE IS ONE RATHER EUPHORIC STORY IN THE PAPER TODAY THAT SUGGESTS THE MAKINGS OF AN INGREDIENT IN THE MIDDLE EAST ARE AT HAND AND THAT SOMETHING MIGHT BE ANNOUNCED FAIRLY QUICKLY. CAN YOU TELL US WHETHER YOU HAVE BEEN

APPRISED OF THE IMMINENCE OF ANY SUCH AGREEMENT?

A. WE REALLY DON'T HAVE ANYTHING TO ADD TO WHAT WE HAVE SAID OVER THE LAST FEW DAYS. THE PARTIES HAVE TALKED TO  
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EACH OTHER. WE REALLY DON'T HAVE ANY COMMENT ON THEIR DISCUSSIONS AND AT THAT LEVEL WE ARE NOT PARTICIPATING, IN ANY CASE. THAT IS TO SAY, BETWEEN THE TWO HEADS OF THEIR RESPECTIVE GOVERNMENTS.

WE ARE, OF COURSE, AS WE HAVE SAID BEFORE HOPEFUL THAT THERE IS GOING TO BE CONTINUED PROGRESS TOWARD A COMPREHENSIVE PEACE SETTLEMENT AND I KNOW THAT WE SHARE THAT HOPE WITH MILLIONS OF PEOPLE AND GOVERNMENTS AROUND THE GLOBE.

Q. IS THE SECRETARY CONSIDERING GOING TO CAIRO? THERE WAS A REPORT THAT MR. DAYAN MIGHT GO THERE EARLY IN JANUARY.

A. IT'S SIMPLY NOT UNDER ACTIVE CONSIDERATION AT THIS TIME.

Q. YOU HAVE NO REQUEST FROM EITHER ISRAEL NOR EGYPT?

A. I HAVE NOTHING ON THAT AT ALL.

Q. WHY IS THAT? IF IT SHOULD GO TO THE FOREIGN MINISTERS LEVEL WOULDN'T IT BE NATURAL THAT HE WOULD ATTEND?

A. IT WOULD BE ENTIRELY UP TO THE PARTIES AS TO WHAT THEY THINK WOULD BE USEFUL -- AS I HAVE TRIED TO SUGGEST -- AND UPON THEIR SENSE OF WHAT IS HELPFUL, AS I HAVE SAID, WE WOULD BE GLAD TO TAKE IT INTO CONSIDERATION AND GIVE IT VERY ACTIVE CONSIDERATION. BUT I JUST CAN'T SPECULATE ON THAT BECAUSE THE REPORTS THEMSELVES ARE SIMPLY THAT -- REPORTS, OF AN UP-COMING MEETING.

Q. I WOULD LIKE TO TAKE YOU BACK FOR A MOMENT TO WHAT YOU HAVE SAID IN ANSWER TO A PREVIOUS QUESTION. YOU BEGAN BY SAYING THAT THE "U.S. ATTITUDE IS NOT WHAT MATTERS," AND I WONDER HOW ALL-ENCOMPASSING YOU WANT THAT TO BE. IF, FOR EXAMPLE, THE UNITED STATES WERE TO SEE THE EGYPTIANS AND THE ISRAELIS MOVING TOWARD A UNILATERAL AGREEMENT, UNCLASSIFIED

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WOULD THAT AMERICAN ATTITUDE STILL PREVAIL?

A. AGAIN, I THINK WE HAVE GONE THROUGH THAT ONE BEFORE. I WOULD SIMPLY, IN THE ABSENCE OF ANY INDICATION WHATSOEVER THAT THEY ARE DOING ANYTHING EXCEPT WHAT THEY SAY THEY ARE DOING (WHICH IS TRYING TO SET THE GROUNDWORK FOR A COMPREHENSIVE SETTLEMENT) I AM JUST IN NO POSITION TO SPECULATE ABOUT OUR ATTITUDE.

OUR ATTITUDE IS THAT THE FORCES WHICH HAVE BEEN SET INTO PLAY IN THE MIDDLE EAST BY THE INITIATIVES OF MR. SADAT AND MR. BEGIN, ARE POSITIVE ONES WHICH WE SUPPORT AND THE DIRECTION IN WHICH THEY SAY THEY ARE GOING (PUBLICLY AND PRIVATELY) IS A POSITIVE ONE AND WE CONTINUE TO WISH IT EVERY SUCCESS; AND STAND READY TO HELP IN ANY WAY WE CAN.

Q. BUT INsofar AS THE UNIMPORTANCE FOR THE MOMENT OF THE U.S. ATTITUDE, THAT WOULD BE AS LONG AS THE TWO PARTIES CONTINUE TO MOVE TOWARD WHAT THE UNITED STATES PERCEIVES

TO BE A COMPREHENSIVE SETTLEMENT. IS THAT CORRECT?

A. THE UNITED STATES, AGAIN, IS VERY INTERESTED IN SEEING THAT THIS PROCESS WHICH HAS BEEN INITIATED, BE SUCCESSFUL. OUR ATTITUDE IS SUPPORTIVE OF THE PROCESS AND I AM JUST NOT GOING TO BE ABLE TO SPECULATE AS TO WHAT IT WOULD BE IF THIS HAPPENED OR THAT HAPPENED. THE GENERAL DIRECTION IN WHICH THESE TALKS HAVE BEEN GOING -- THE APPROACH WHICH HAS BEEN TAKEN -- IS ONE WHICH WE SUPPORT ENTIRELY, AND I REALLY CAN'T GO BEYOND THAT.

Q. IT JUST SEEMS A LITTLE BIT DISINGENUOUS TO ME TO SUGGEST THAT THE UNITED STATES -- WHICH AFTER ALL IS STILL THE MOST IMPORTANT THIRD PARTY IN THE WORLD, IN THE UNCLASSIFIED

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MIDDLE EAST -- IS TAKING A TOTAL HANDS OFF ATTITUDE.

A. WELL I WOULDN'T SUGGEST THAT WE ARE TAKING A HANDS OFF ATTITUDE. I HAVE SAID REPEATEDLY THAT AT EVERY INSTANCE IN WHICH WE ARE ASKED TO PLAY A ROLE, IN WHICH WE HAVE A CHANCE TO PARTICIPATE IN WAYS WHICH SEEM TO BE CONSTRUCTIVE BY THE OTHER PARTIES, WE ARE DOING SO AND WE WILL CONTINUE TO DO SO.

I SIMPLY MEAN THAT ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT THINGS WHICH HAS HAPPENED IN THE MIDDLE EAST IN GENERATIONS IS TAKING PLACE -- DIRECT TALKS BETWEEN THE PARTIES -- AND THAT IN THAT INSTANCE THE ROLE THAT I HAVE OUTLINED FOR US IS THE ROLE WE INTEND TO PURSUE.

NOW I JUST DON'T KNOW WHAT MORE I CAN SAY TO THAT.

Q. YOU WOULDN'T DENY, EVEN THOUGH IT WAS DURING ANOTHER ADMINISTRATION, THAT THE UNITED STATES WAS HEAVILY INVOLVED IN THAT -- SUGGESTING, OR YOU MIGHT EVEN SAY "PRE-SURING" THE ISRAELIS TO RELEASE AN ARMY TO WITHDRAW FROM THE EAST BANK OF THE SUEZ CANAL AND MITLA GIDI PASSES AND THE ABU-RODEIS OIL FIELDS -- AND I AM WONDERING, IN YOUR KNOWLEDGE OF THE STATE DEPARTMENT INVOLVEMENT, WHAT COMPARABLE ACTIONS HAS THE STATE DEPARTMENT EVOKED FROM THE SADAT

GOVERNMENT? IF ANY.

A. I WOULD NOT SEEK TO TAKE CREDIT IN ANY CASE. I AM SIMPLY TELLING YOU THAT THE INITIATIVES THAT HAVE BEEN TAKEN ARE THE ONES WHICH WE SUPPORT. WHAT HAPPENED BEFORE I AM NOT VERY USEFUL ON.

Q. HODDING, HAS THERE BEEN ANY HIGH LEVEL CONTACT WITH KING HUSSEIN IN CONNECTION WITH THE BEGIN VISIT? HE'S BEEN TRAVELING THROUGH MUCH OF THE WEEK, AND I WONDER

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WHETHER THE DEPARTMENT HAS BRIEFED HIM DIRECTLY, OR HEARD FROM HIM DIRECTLY -- ON MR. BEGIN'S IDEAS.

A. WE HAVE BEEN IN CONVERSATION WITH THE JORDANIAN GOVERNMENT ON THE PROPOSALS. I AM NOT SURE OF THE SPECIFIC REACTION FROM THE KING. I REALLY DON'T HAVE ANYTHING FOR YOU ON THAT.

Q. HAS THE DEPARTMENT ALSO BRIEFED PRESIDENT ASAD, OF SYRIA ABOUT THE BEGIN VISIT AND THE BEGIN PLAN?

A. WELL YOU ARE GETTING READY TO NIBBLE ME RIGHT DOWN ANSWERING A QUESTION THAT I ANNOUNCED YESTERDAY I WASN'T GOING TO ANSWER -- WHICH IS TO ITEMIZE EVERYBODY WE TALKED TO. BUT I CAN SAY THAT THE MAJOR PARTIES TO THE MIDDLE EAST SITUATION HAVE BEEN BRIEFED.

2. THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION WAS POSTED IN THE DEPARTMENT PRESS OFFICE IN RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS TAKEN AT THE DECEMBER 21 PRESS BRIEFING:

Q. CAN YOU PROVIDE US INFORMATION ABOUT THE USAF AIRPLANE THAT TOOK WEIZMAN FROM ISRAEL TO EGYPT? WHAT KIND OF A PLANE WAS IT? WHEN WAS IT REQUESTED? WHERE DID IT COME FROM? IS IT BEING USED FOR ANYTHING ELSE CONNECTED WITH THE MIDDLE EAST PEACE EFFORTS?

A. ISRAELI DEFENSE MINISTER WEIZMAN SAID YESTERDAY THAT HIS TRIP TO EGYPT WAS AGREED TO DURING THE SADAT VISIT TO JERUSALEM. WE WERE ASKED SEVERAL WEEKS AGO BY THE ISRAELIS TO PROVIDE TRANSPORTATION TO TAKEN HIM TO EGYPT. WE CO-OPERATED IN THIS MATTER AS WE HAVE COOPERATED WITH BOTH SIDES IN PROVIDING FACILITATIVE ASSISTANCE, AND MADE  
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AVAILABLE A USAF EXECUTIVE AIRCRAFT, BASED IN EUROPE, ON A ONE-TIME BASIS.

Q. CAN YOU GIVE US ANYTHING ON THE SECRETARY'S MEETING WITH DOBRYNIN? HAS THE U.S. GIVEN THE SOVIETS A READ-OUT ON THE BEGIN VISIT?

A. WE HAVE DISCUSSED IN GENERAL TERMS THE BEGIN VISIT AND CURRENT STATE OF AFFAIRS IN THE MIDDLE EAST WITH A NUMBER OF GOVERNMENTS, INCLUDING THE USSR. IN THE CASE OF THE SOVIET UNION, THIS WAS DONE DURING THE SECRETARY'S MEETING WITH AMBASSADOR DOBRYNIN ON DECEMBER 16.

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<< END OF DOCUMENT >>

## Message Attributes

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